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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The idea of forming an organization of Bulgarian refugees in Yugoslavia was entertained by many Bulgarians immediately following the Cominform rift. In early 1949, Bulgarian refugees formed on their own initiative three separate committees in the Serbian towns of Rankovicevo, Krusevac and Paracin. By the end of that year the Yugoslav Government began to take an interest in these groups and discovered that one of their principal activities was to assist Bulgarians to escape clandestinely to the West. Inquiries made on the part of Yugoslav officials convinced them that they would be unable to gain the sympathy of the leaders of the three committees. They therefore decided to form a Bulgarian organization of their own, using young Bulgarian students as the backbone of the organization.
2. In early October 1950 the Yugoslavs began issuing scholarships for the Universities of Belgrade and Zagreb to a number of young Bulgarian refugees. Ivan Piperov, an official of the Ministry of Trade for Serbia, who is of Bulgarian descent, and Nikolai Cholakov, a Bulgarian student, arrived in Krusevac and stated that they were members of an organizing committee intent on selecting delegates for the Bulgarian Emigrant Society that was to be set up in Belgrade. The purpose of the Society was explained to local Bulgarians who were not very enthused. The two men nominated two delegates and then left for Paracin to appoint other delegates.
3. The meeting of the delegates was scheduled for 29 October in Belgrade. On 25 October the organizing committee called a meeting of Bulgarian emigrants in Belgrade, consisting in great part of students who had been granted scholarships, in order to have them elect delegates for the assembly and to give them at the same time a preview of the regulations governing the Society which the assembly would be asked to endorse. When shown the articles of the Society which had been prepared by the Yugoslavs, however, the students were in complete disagreement with the organizing committee. The committee, aware that there was no chance of having the articles passed by a majority of delegates, postponed the assembly scheduled for 29 October under the pretext that a hall was not available in which to hold the meeting.
4. In early December the Yugoslavs suddenly announced that the assembly would

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be held immediately with about one day's notice. Of the 32 delegates 27 appeared for the meeting. A long debate took place between the organizing committee, which wished to have the articles of the Society accepted without question, and the Bulgarians who, led by the students, wanted certain changes made. Article V caused the greatest controversy and it was finally amended by replacing the term "building socialism" with "material and cultural advancement". Following this, the organizing committee asked that they elect an Executive Committee and a Control Commission.

5. Although most of the delegates were reluctant to serve in these positions the following were finally elected:

Executive Committee

- a. A certain Bulgarian, who was not present at the meeting.
- b. Todor Alexiev. He is about 55 years of age and a lawyer from Godech, Bulgaria. A former member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, he still has Communist sympathies.
- c. Dimitar Mihailov. Aged 30, he is a former president of the Fatherland Front in Teren, Bulgaria.
- d. Ivan Manov. A Communist, 30 years of age and former pilot in the Bulgarian Air Corps.
- e. Nikolai Cholakov. Of right-wing tendencies, he is 33 years of age.
- f. Borislav Grozdanov. About 37 years of age, apolitical, from Slayanovo, Nikopol District, Bulgaria.
- g. Stojan Radev. He is about 40 years of age.

Control Commission

- a. Boris Peshev. Former Agrarian Party member in Bulgaria.
- b. Petar Lakov
- c. Kiril Tomov. He is about 28 years of age.

6. Members of the Executive Committee then chose the following leaders:

President - Dimitar Mihailov
 Vice President - Todor Alexiev
 Secretary - Nikolai Cholakov
 Treasurer - Borislav Grozdanov

7. Following the election of officers, a certain Sirovic, a former officer in the Spanish Civil War who appeared to be the official Yugoslav Government representative charged with organizing the Society, informed the Executive Committee that he was leaving the remainder of the work in their hands. At the first meeting of the Executive Committee it was decided to send the following note to the Yugoslav Government:

- a. The Bulgarian Emigrant Society will be more successful in winning the sympathy of Bulgarian refugees if the Government does not try to force the refugees to adhere.
- b. The students who refused to join the organization should not be arrested or persecuted because it was the intransigent attitude of the organizing committee which alienated the students who, with time, could be won back to the organization.

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8. Several days later, however, the Yugoslav Government began to arrest students, and other students were forced to flee Belgrade to escape arrest. Because of this action by the Government contrary to their recommendations, all the Executive Committee members with the exception of Mihailov, Cholakov and Grozdanov resigned, some of them going into hiding. The organizing committee, consisting of Piperov, Bogdanov, Maxim Petrov and Cholakov was criticized by the Government for allowing the Society to go to pieces and they in turn attempted to put the blame on subversive elements who were influencing the students. On 6 February the organizing committee ordered that an assembly of the remaining delegates be held and that a temporary sub-committee be elected to carry on the work of the Society.
9. This committee was composed of the following members:
- a. Evtim Petrov. A former member of the Communist student organization in Bulgaria.
 - b. Delcho Lovchev. He is 27 years of age and from the village of Savolano, Kyustendil District, Bulgaria.
 - c. Rangel Puzvanov. He is 26 years of age and from Cernevo (sic), Pernik District, Bulgaria.
 - d. Dimcho N. Georgiev. He is 22 and from Goranovts, Kyustendil District, Bulgaria.
 - e. Iordan Kalchev. He is 26 years of age
 - f. Lilyana Dimitrova. He is 27 years of age.
 - g. Georgi Panev. A former Communist, now in Trieste.
10. The sub-committee is without any real power and has not met officially since it was organized. It has no headquarters and all files and documents relating to the activity of the Committee are carried in the pockets of the members. The Committee can, however, through its connections with the University of Belgrade, give scholarships to Bulgarians. It often happens that on one day the Yugoslav Government or the UDB will withdraw the scholarship of a Bulgarian student and the same student will be reinstated by the Committee the following day. There is also some talk among sub-committee members about publishing a weekly newspaper in Bulgarian.

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Comment: For previous disseminations concerning Bulgarian refugees in Yugoslavia your attention is called to the following

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